

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application and are presented to the Examiner for consideration.

Applicants admit the grouped species are not patentably distinct and respectfully request that the election of species be withdrawn.

The claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Constantine or Apps or Wilson. The cited references each describe stackable containers. The Office Action states it would have been obvious to stack the described containers in a refrigerator or freezer and place them side-by-side to store food. Applicants assert the cited references do not suggest or describe the storage system and method of the subject invention. The subject invention is a food storage system and method which efficiently utilizes the space in, for example, a freezer compartment. In a preferred embodiment, the containers are made of a polypropylene which is shatter-resistant when frozen. The system and method are designed to allow an individual to access items at the bottom of a chest freezer in less than one minute. The subject system maximizes utilization of the storage space by compartmentalizing stored items so they are readily accessible.

The system comprises a plurality of containers that are configured in height, width and depth to occupy the interior of the appliance. Containers are stacked atop one another and placed side-by-side within the interior of the freezer. Items placed in the containers are readily identifiable through the open tops of the containers. A desired item is easily accessed by removing any overlaying containers by grasping their peripheral flange to lift the overlaying containers from the container containing the desired item, removing the desired food item from the container and replacing the overlaying containers. The containers are stackable within the appliance but can nest when empty requiring less storage space if they are kept outside the appliance. Further, nested containers provide a visual indicator of useable space if left inside the appliance. The Constantine, Apps and Wilson references do not describe the storage system and method of the subject invention which maximizes the utility of an appliance by organizing its contents. Applicants therefore respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection based on these references.

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In view of the foregoing remarks and the amendments to the claims, applicants believe that the claims are now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any of this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,



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